

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 MCT-01 ACDA-07 /067 W
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P R 300659Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1532
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 6399

PARIS PASS TO BORDEAUX AND MARSEILLE
USEEC AND AMEMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SP
SUBJ: THE BASQUE TANGLE REVISITED: 100,000 RALLY RELATIVELY
PEACEFULLY NEAR PAMPLONA

REF: (A) MADRID 5291
(B) MADRID 6253
(C) MADRID 6340

1. THE FOUR COLUMNS OF THE "MARCH FOR LIBERTY" (REFTELS),
AFTER DECIDING NOT TO ATTEMPT TO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO
PAMPLONA PROPER, CONVERGED SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, ON A
GOVT.-DESIGNATED FIELD OUTSIDE THE NAVARRESE CAPITAL,
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WHERE THEY HELD A MASSIVE AND RELATIVELY ORDERLY PRO-
AMNESTY/PRO-AUTONOMY RALLY. AMCONSUL BILBAO OFFICER
ON THE SCENE ADVISES THAT PERHAPS 100,000 PEOPLE WERE
ON HAND, WITH ABOUT 50,000 ACTUALLY TAKING PART IN THE
RALLY AND ANOTHER 50,000 MILLION ABOUT ON THE FRINGES.

2. ACCORDING TO AMCONSUL BILBAO, REINFORCED CONTINGENTS

OF POLICE AND CIVIL GUARD RE-ROUTED OR TURNED BACK ALL CARS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER PAMPLONA IF THE DRIVERS WERE UNABLE TO PROVE RESIDENCE IN THE CITY. ACCESS TO THE SITE OF THE RALLY WAS LEFT OPEN, HOWEVER, AND FACILITATED BY THE POLICE, WHO WERE VISIBLY PRESENT ALONG ALL ACCESS ROUTES BUT LARGELY ABSENT FROM THE RALLY GROUNDS THEMSELVES, WHERE THE DEMONSTRATORS REPORTEDLY PROVIDED THEIR OWN SECURITY PATROLS.

3. THE PROCEEDINGS, WHICH INCLUDED SPEECHES BY OLD BASQUE WARHORSE TELESFORO MONZON AND SOME OF THE NINE AT-LARGE RETURNED EXILES (ALL OF WHOM WERE PRESENT), WENT OFF WITHOUT ANY APPARENT HITCH (FAR-LEFT BASQUE CORTES (PARLIAMENT) MEMBERS LETAMENDIA AND BANDRES ALSO WERE PRESENT BUT IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY ADDRESSED THE CROWD). THE VARIOUS SPEAKERS MADE THE PREDICTABLE CALLS FOR AUTONOMY, AMNESTY AND FREEDOM FOR "APALA," ALTHOUGH AMCONSUL BILBAO REPORTS THAT CHANTS FOR "INDEPENDENCE" OFTEN DROWNED OUT THOSE FOR AMNESTY. (WE UNDERSTAND THAT APALA'S LAWYERS WILL RENEW THEIR EFFORTS THIS WEEK TO SECURE HIS RELEASE FROM PRISON IN MARSEILLE, BOTH THROUGH APPROACHES TO THE AUTHORITIES IN MARSEILLE AND REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT FROM THE FRENCH LEFT.)

4. THERE WERE SOME SCUFFLES AT THE SITE, BUT THE ONLY
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POTENTIALLY SERIOUS CONFRONTATION ENSUED WHEN A FEW THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS BROKE OFF FORM THE MAIN GROUP LATE IN THE AFTERNOON AND ATTEMPTED TO MARCH ON PAMPLONA. THEY WERE MET BY POLICE AND CIVIL GUARD ELEMENTS, WHO TURNED THEM BACK WITH TEAR GAS AND RUBBER BULLETS. A FEW DEMONSTRATORS REPORTEDLY WERE INJURED, NONE OF THEM SERIOUSLY, BUT NO ONE REPORTEDLY WAS DETAINED. THERE WERE SOME REPORTS OF SCATTERED DISTURBANCES DURING THE EARLY EVENING IN PAMPLONA PROPER, BUT THE MADRID MORNING PRESS REPORTS THAT THE CITY WAS QUIET BY 10:00 PM. AMCONSUL BILBAO SAW NO EVIDENCE OF ULTRA-RIGHTIST PROVOCATIONS, NOR DOES THE MADRID PRESS MAKE ANY MENTION OF THEM. THE UNION CARBIDE PLANT WAS NOT MOLESTED (REF C).

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 6399

PARIS PASS TO BORDEAUX AND MARSEILLE
USEEC AND AMEMBASSY

5. COMMENT: THE PUBLIC ORDER PROBLEMS WHICH HAVE
ATTENDED THE "MARCH FOR LIBERY," TOGETHER WITH ETA
THREATS TO RETURN TO "ARMED STRUGGLE" (REFTELS), ARE
A SHARP REMINDER THAT WHILE THE JUNE 15 ELECTIONS
PRODUCED A NEW POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND CONSTITUTED
THE FIRST STEP TOWARD A POSSIBLE EVENTUAL SOLUTION OF
THE BASQUE PROBLEM, CONSIDERABLE DISTANCE REMAINS TO
BE TRAVELED.

-- ELEMENTS OF THE RADICAL BASQUE NATIONALIST LEFT,
SOME OF WHOM ALREADY HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO
NOT RECOGNIZE THE LEGITIMACY OF THE JUNE 15 CONTEST,
HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY CAN CONTINUE TO TAKE THE
POLITICAL INITIATIVE AND MOBILIZE LARGE NUMBERS OF
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FELLOW BASQUES NOT ONLY AROUND THE EMOTIONAL ISSUES OF
AMNESTY AND AUTONOMY WRIT LARGE, BUT, IN THE SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE APALA CASE, OVER THE
HUNGER STRIKE OF A SINGLE BASQUE PRISONER, AND AN
ACKNOWLEDGED TERRORIST AT THAT.

-- MEANWHILE, THE ELECTION-WINNING PSOE AND BASQUE
PNV CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN A LARGELY PASSIVE AND AT

BEST REACTIVE POSTURE VIS-A-VIS THE MACHINATIONS OF THE BASQUE FAR-LEFT. THEY CLEARLY ARE UNWILLING TO MAKE THEMSELVES VULNERABLE TO THE CHARGE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CO-OPTED BY MADRID OR TO HAVE THEIR AMNESTY AND AUTONOMY BONA-FIDES IN ANY WAY BROUGHT INTO QUESTION. -- AT THE SAME TIME THE GOVT., SENSITIVE TO THE FACT THAT NASCENT SPANISH DEMOCRACY WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO SURVIVE ANY "ULSTERIZATION" OF THE BASQUE COUNTRY, IS CAUGHT BETWEEN THE NECESSITY OF MAINTAINING ITS AUTHORITY AND THE IMPERATIVE OF NOT DEALING WITH THE BASQUE SITUATION IN A HEAVY-HANDED MANNER WHICH WOULD ONLY PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE BASQUE FAR-LEFT.

6. THE GOVT., PSOE AND PNV REALIZE THAT THE PATH TO AN EVENTUALY SOLUTION OF THE BASQUE PROBLEM RUNS IN THE FIRST INSTANCE THROUGH THE ELABORATION OF A CONSENSUS TRANSITIONAL AUTONOMY ARRANGEMENT, ALMOST CERTAINLY SOME CORTES ACTION ON A FINAL AND DEFINITIVE AMNESTY LAW, AND FINALLY THE CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR AUTONOMY THEMSELVES. THE TRANSITIONAL AUTONOMY ARRANGEMENTS IN PARTICULAR WILL REQUIRE A MORE CONCERTED EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE PNV AND PSOE WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE BASQUE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (SEE BILBAO A-12) AND BY THE GOVT. ITSELF, WHICH WILL BE COMPELLED TO DIVERT AT LEAST SOME OF THE ATTENTION WHICH IT HAS RECENTLY DEVOTED TO THE CONFIDENTIAL

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CATALAN PROBLEM TO THE MORE VOLATILE, AND IN MANY WAYS MORE COMPLEX, BASQUE TANGLE. AT BEST THIS WILL BE AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TASK. THESE MEASURES WILL NOT SATISFY THE RADICAL BASQUE NATIONALIST LEFT, WHICH EVEN IN A BEST CASE SCENARIO WILL RETAIN TROUBLEMAKINGCAPACITY, BUT THEY MUST FACILITATE THE ISOLATION OF THESE GROUPS BY TRANSFORMING WHAT HAS UNTIL NOW BEEN THE RELATIVE PASIVITY OF THE PSOE AND PNV INTO ACTIVE AND IF NEED BE AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE OF THE NEW POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND THE NEW POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BASQUE PROVINCES AND THE MADRID GOVT. THIS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE NEW SPAIN MUST BE HOME GROWN TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY, IT CANNOT BE MANUFACTURED IN MADRID. STABLER

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
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